CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system for transporting stabilized crude oil from an offshore production location to one or more onshore refineries or storage facilities, said system comprising:

a flexible hose having a first end and a second end, said first end being in fluid connection with the platform from which crude oil is produced;

an unmoored, dynamically positionable FSO constructed and arranged for fluid connection with said second end of said flexible hose;

at least one shuttle tanker constructed and arranged to offload stabilized crude oil from said unmoored, dynamically positionable FSO and transport the crude oil from said unmoored, dynamically positionable FSO to the one or more onshore refineries or storage facilities.

2. The system as defined in Claim 1, wherein said unmoored, dynamically positionable FSO is maintained at a predetermined distance from the offshore production location.

3. The system as defined in Claim 1, wherein said unmoored, dynamically positionable FSO is caused to maintain a movement pattern with respect to the motion of an offshore platform.

4. The system as defined in Claim 1, wherein said unmoored, dynamically positionable FSO is maintained at a predetermined position with respect to a point on the earth's surface.

5. The system as defined in Claim 1, wherein said at least one shuttle tanker is able to change destinations while en route from said FSO.

6. The system as defined in Claim 1, wherein the destination of said shuttle tanker is selected form a group of factors including the price paid for the crude oil and the chemical signature of the crude oil.

7. The system as defined in Claim 1, wherein said at least one shuttle tanker includes a plurality of compartments for segregating stabilized crude oil with different chemical signatures.

8. A system for transporting stabilized crude oil from an offshore production location without storage capabilities to one or more onshore refineries or storage facilities, said system comprising:

a flexible hose having a first end and a second end, said first end being in fluid connection with the platform from which crude oil is produced;

at least one shuttle tanker constructed and arranged to offload crude oil from the offshore production location without storage capabilities and transport the crude oil to the one or more onshore refineries or storage facilities.

9. The system as defined in Claim 8, wherein said at least one shuttle tanker is maintained at a predetermined distance from the offshore production location while the crude oil is being transferred from the offshore production location.

10. The system as defined in Claim 8, wherein said at least one shuttle tanker is caused to maintain a movement pattern with respect to the motion of an offshore platform.

11. The system as defined in Claim 8, wherein said at least one shuttle tanker is maintained at a predetermined position with respect to a point on the earth's surface.

12. The system as defined in Claim 8, wherein said at least one shuttle tanker includes a plurality of compartments for segregating stabilized crude oil with different chemical signatures.

13. A method for transporting stabilized crude oil from an offshore production location to one or more onshore refineries or storage facilities, said method comprising the steps of:

moving the stabilized crude oil from the offshore production location to an unmoored, dynamically positionable FSO;

moving the crude oil from said unmoored, dynamically positionable FSO to one or more shuttle tankers;

moving the tankers from said unmoored, dynamically positionable FSO to one or more onshore refineries or storage facilities.

14. The method as defined in Claim 13, wherein said unmoored, dynamically positionable FSO is maintained at a predetermined position from the offshore production location.

15. The method as defined in Claim 13 wherein said unmoored, dynamically positionable FSO is caused to maintain a movement pattern with respect to the motion of an offshore platform.

16. The method as defined in Claim 13, wherein said unmoored, dynamically positionable FSO is maintained at a predetermined position with respect to a point on the earth's surface.

17. The method as defined in Claim 13, wherein said at least one shuttle tanker is able to change destinations while en route from said FSO.

18. The method as defined in Claim 13, wherein the destination of said shuttle tanker is selected from a group of factors including the price paid for the stabilized crude oil and the chemical signature of the stabilized crude oil.

19. A method for transporting stabilized crude oil from an offshore production location without storage capabilities to one or more onshore refineries or storage facilities, said method comprising the steps of:

connecting the first end of a flexible hose to the offshore production location without storage capabilities;

connecting the second end of said flexible hose to a shuttle tanker;

moving the shuttle tanker to the one or more onshore refineries or storage facilities.

20. The method as defined in Claim 19, wherein said shuttle tanker includes a plurality of compartments for segregating stabilized crude oil with different chemical signatures.

21. A method for transporting crude oil from a platform located in deep water to one or more onshore refineries or storage facilities, said method comprising the steps of:

connecting the first end of a flexible hose having a first end and a second end to the platform from which crude oil is produced;

locating an unmoored, dynamically positionable FSO in a position where it may be connected to said second end of said flexible hose;

loading said unmoored, dynamically positionable FSO with crude oil through said flexible hose;

off-loading the crude oil from said unmoored, dynamically positionable FSO to one or more shuttle tankers;

transporting the crude oil to one or more of a plurality of offshore refineries or storage facilities.